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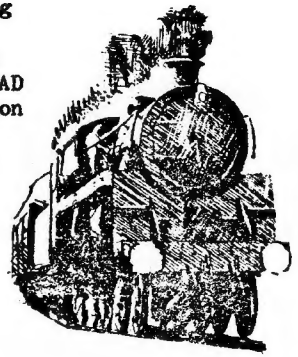

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ON THE COVER

Yet another representation of the Amtrak F-40 engine, this one from a folder produced by Amtrak for its Family Days celebrations and its tenth anniversary.

LETTERS

...The absurd comment about some crew getting paid "a full passenger day plus for the freight job they would have worked" (RTN 235, p. 19) sounds to me like sour grapes from some frustrated arm chair railroader who would like to get his hands on the throttle and show us all how it's done.

As a locomotive engineer for the BN, I've been involved in many situations similar to what you described, but with freight trains. Without getting into a deep discussion of labor agreement provisions and what the circumstances may or may not have been in Klamath Falls, I can say with at least some degree of insight that it would be highly unlikely that the railroad would call a road crew for a two-mile move from the yard to the depot!

A more appropriate course would be to have a yard crew already on duty run the train to the station and then return to their switching chores. For extra compensation they would get nothing. If, however, under some extraordinary set of circumstances a road crew actually was used, it is extremely doubtful that the timekeeper would be as generous as your reporter would have us believe.

Name withheld
St. Paul, Minnesota

I was especially interested in the Blishaks' report on their trips aboard numbers 15 and 18 (RTN 236). Caltrans' great expectations for this new overnight service seemed well-founded, and for some reason, I expected the train to be something really special--i.e., an updated version of the LARK. It was thus very disappointing to learn that the SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA is just another so-so Amtrak operation: the sleepers are in marginal--perhaps submarginal--condition, the bar on the southbound virtually sells out between Sacramento and Oakland, the "diner" on the southbound literally sells out during breakfast, and the sleeping car attendant on the northbound hides out until the passengers track him down. This is a minor point, perhaps, but the train is also an aesthetic disaster. As my friend Dave Randall is fond of saying, it has all the visual appeal of a brick attached to a wiener. It's obvious from the Blishaks' article that the SPIRIT also has its good points, and it's unfortunate that they have to be offset by the service problems listed above.

R. Lyle Key, Jr.
Jacksonville, Florida

In mid-December, Amtrak train service between Seattle and Portland was suspended after erosion undermined the main line of the Burlington Northern just south of Tacoma. Amtrak used buses to get patrons between Seattle and Portland, and this was not only inconvenient but also unnecessary.

Several years ago when a freight train derailed in that area, Amtrak sent the morning Portland to Seattle train via Fort Lewis and the Prairie line. I rode the train that day and there was very little delay. Sometime during the day, the freight wreckage was cleared and our train returned from Seattle on the main line.

Henry Korman
Longview, Washington

The article by F. K. Plous Jr., beginning on page 9, was reprinted from the Fast Mail with the permission of the author.

REAGAN BUDGET CUTTERS READY AXES AGAIN FOR AMTRAK

The Federal budget for fiscal year 1983, which runs from Oct 1982 to Sep 1983, was formally released to the public on Feb 8, altho it was leaked to the press on the weekend before. The Administration's requested budget for Amtrak is only $600 million, $188 million less than the amount Congress has already authorized for FY 83, and also well below the current year's $735 million. To emphasize the decrease in the budget, NARP pointed out that the $600 million figure is $13 million less than the amount that budget director David Stockman had originally proposed for the current fiscal year (a figure which Amtrak had said would have caused the shutdown of the Amtrak system outside the Northeast Corridor). NARP said there were reports that Stockman had first proposed only $400 million for Amtrak in FY 83, but that DOT Secretary Drew Lewis had insisted on $600 million, saying that Congress would try to increase the latter amount even further.
To make financial matters even worse for Amtrak, the budget proposal rescinds Amtrak's current exemption from about $8 million in state and local taxes. It also deletes "save the CARDINAL" language and changes regulations regarding 403-b (state-supported) service to require the states to pay 100% of the long-term avoidable costs of a train instead of 45 to 65% of the short-term avoidable costs. The budget talks about Amtrak's saving $75 million in labor and management costs, but is apparently vague about the details of this proposed savings. The budget also seeks to alter Amtrak labor protection, lowering it to the type of protection now provided for Conrail employees.

Looking at the total Dept. of Transportation budget, spending for air transport is up 6.4% (if one includes a proposed 8% passenger ticket tax on scheduled air flights), Interstate highway construction is down 2.9%, all highway spending is down 5.3%, all transportation spending is down 7.5%, mass transit is down 15.6%, highway safety is down 25%, Amtrak is down 27.7%, railway freight assistance is down 68.9%, NE Corridor Improvement is down 71%, the Alaska Railroad is down 72.7%, and freight rehabilitation is down 100%.

NARP said that the outlook for Amtrak is "cautiously optimistic." Amtrak already has $788 million in FY 83 budget authority, and the budget committees in Congress could fight to keep that amount. NARP is asking all rail supporters to contact their senators and congressmen to ask the following of them: (1) support an Amtrak appropriation of $788 million for fiscal year 1983, with (2) no change in the exemption of state and local tax, and (3) no change in the 403-b law.

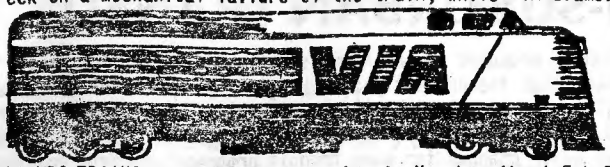
The House Appropriations Transportation Subcommittee will hold hearings with Amtrak and Administration witnesses on Mar 29 and 30, and public testimony on all transportation modes on Apr 28 & 29. The Senate will hold similar hearings in late April.

In writing to your Congressman, address letters or telegrams in care of the House of Representatives, Washington DC 20515; for your Senators, address the Senate, Washington DC 20510.

RAIL CANADA

THE CANADIAN DERAILED at Red Rock, Ontario, 100 kilometers from Thunder Bay, on Jan 31. The last 9 of 14 cars derailed, with the rearmost four tilting onto their left sides. There were 89 passengers and 25 crew members aboard, and 31 persons were sent to hospitals for treatment. Of these, three adults and one child were flown by hospital plane and helicopter to a Thunder Bay hospital, while the others were taken by ambulances and bus. The uninjured passengers were bused to a Thunder Bay hotel. The report we have does not indicate whether the train

was eastbound or westbound. The last four cars that went on their sides were two sleepers, a diner and a "Park" series dome observation car. CP initially blamed the wreck on a mechanical failure of the train, while VIA blamed it on a broken rail.



VIA'S LRC TRAINS may return to service in March. About Feb 5, VIA, Canadian National and manufacturer Bombardier reached an agreement on which agencies should shoulder the costs of modifications to the new trains to assure their proper operation.

TRANSPORT 2000 CANADA held its annual meeting in mid-January in Montreal. New officers of the transport consumers organization are Guy Chartrand, president; Harry Gow, immediate past president; John Pearce, first vice president; Tim Larsen, second vice president; Wilj Walker, secretary; and James Asplin, Treasurer. The first three names are carried over from the previous year. Mr. Milne Hall will preside over a policy committee composed also of Mr. Gow and Mr. Jackson. Rail advocates having suggestions for a new Model Canadian Transport Policy should send suggestions or briefs to Mr. Hall, c/o T-2000 Canada, Box 858, Station B, Ottawa, Ont. K1P 5P9, Canada. Membership fees for T-2000 will increase from $10 to $15 per year if regional groups support the motion. (In the meantime, interested persons can join at the old rate.)

T-2000's HARRY GOW told the annual meeting in January that the people at VIA headquarters who did the planning for the rail cut and the "substitute service" were incompetent. "If they tried to hurt things, they could not do that badly", said Gow. Roy Ellis of Regina told the gathering that the problem with Canadian rail transport is not so much incompetence as it is national rail policy. Marc Dufour of Montreal said that VIA Rail is a "conspiracy of the government; which is aiming to eliminate rail passenger service except for a few politically profitable routes."

CP RAIL'S PLAN to first reduce and then discontinue service on the Montreal-Rigaud commuter line has been delayed two months. CP announced the delay Jan 26 as a response to a request from the Quebec Transport Minister to allow more time to come up with a funding solution to the line. The service now stands to be reduced April 1 instead of Feb 1, and dropped July 1 instead of May 1.

QUEBEC TRANSPORT MINISTER Michel Clair announced Jan 12 that he will appeal the Federal Court's Dec 18 decision which let stand the Nov rail passenger cuts. The case brought by the Transport Minister in association with the town of Mont-Laurier, the Laurentian Regional Development Council, the village of Parent, the city of Senneterre and the Laurentian Tourist Ass'n, aimed at invalidating the Pepin-Roberts rail cuts plan. Said Clair, "The deterioration of public transport services flowing from the cuts has made me determined to take all the means available to counter the decision that Mr. Pepin applied in November despite the strong opposition of the population. It is reasonable to hold that an appeal judgment would be in our favor, because it seems abusive for the government of Canada to arbitrarily and unilaterally decide to cut the passenger services."

NOVA SCOTIA'S TRANSPORT Minister Ron Giffin has requested the Canadian Transport Commission to investigate the growing delays in VIA Rail services in Nova Scotia, especially on the Halifax-Sydney run. He said he is "very concerned". It now takes nearly 8 hours to travel from Halifax to Sydney, about an hour longer than the same trip in recent years. The train now averages only 37.7mph.

THE REMAINING TRAIN between Montreal and Halifax is not improving, according to reports. There are frequent locomotive breakdowns and steam system freezes. Of a total of 78 arrivals at either end point between Dec 15 and Jan 22, only 17 were on time--an average of 21%!

URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT

MASS TRANSIT BUDGET proposed by the Administration on Feb 8, for fiscal year 1983, is 15.6% lower than the present year's budget! To quote from the Budget: "In 1983, $3.2 billion in budget authority is requested for mass transit programs. This amount is $0.3 billion below the level provided for 1982. The budget proposals reflect two major changes for mass transit programs: formula grants for operating expenses are to be phased out over a 3-year period, and construction grants--while proposed at near current levels--are directed primarily toward projects that modernize and repair existing systems, proven transit systems. Discretionary assistance for the initiation of new rail transit systems is not proposed in this budget... The Federal share of the national spending for transit operating expenses has been approximately 15% over the last few years. The administration has examined the usefulness of Federal funding of operating costs and determined that State and local governments should assume complete responsibility for operating local mass transit systems. Federal operating assistance has led to a number of unintended consequences. In some areas these funds support marginally effective, conventional transit services where transportation needs could be better served by more cost-effective and innovative alternatives. Shifting financial responsibility to local authorities should make low-cost alternatives more attractive." The Budget said that fares have been artifically low and have not kept pace with inflation since the 1973 oil embargo. No new funds are being requested for formula grants to towns under 50,000 population, but capital projects for them are eligible for discretionary grants. Assistance for continuing construction of up to 75 miles of the Washington Metrorail system will be provided from two grant programs.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION is reportedly urging the budget director to support a proposed user fee on automotive and truck equipment, and including a tax on gasoline. This would raise $5 or 6 billion per year, and a good portion of the revenue would be used to fund mass transit support. Trucking and other highway interests are reported opposed to the proposition.

SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA'S proposed light rail transit line in the "Guadalupe Corridor" comes a step nearer to fruition on Mar 10 when a newly formed board of regional representatives is expected to approve a joint-powers agreement that will lead to the beginning of preliminary engineering studies. Projected completion date for the line, which includes an expressway, is July 1986.

SACRAMENTO TRANSIT PLANNERS should know in about a year whether federal money is available for starting a light rail system in the California capital. If it is, orders for rail cars would quickly be placed, and roadbed construction would begin in 1983, with 1985 set for startup of operations.

NEW ORLEANS'S TRANSIT system future hinges on the outcome of a tax measure to be voted upon on May 15. This will be followed by another tax election in mid-September, which will ask for a tax to support a Regional Transit Authority.

WASHINGTON TRANSIT RIDERSHIP is increasing overall, according to a report given to the Metro Board Jan 28, tho bus ridership has dropped some and subway patronage is up. Figures for Sep-Nov showed ridership of the Metro up by 16,000 per day in Oct and 25,000 per day in Nov. Nov ridership was about 5.8 million, compared to 5.2 million in Nov 1980. Opening of the Addison Road Line brought new riders.

NEW YORK STATE Court of Appeals ruled on Feb 18 that New York City's Transit Authority is not liable for passenger victimization by muggers and criminals.

LONG ISLAND RAIL ROAD acknowledged on Feb 4 that the snafu at Penn Station on Jan 26 (see last issue) was its fault. The problem was a loophole in radio communications procedure, said the LIRR. Amtrak's NIGHT OWL was accidentally routed onto the LIRR, causing a massive problem.

THE PANIC BOX

The following is a summary of major unusual occurrences on the Amtrak system during the second week of January:

● JAN 10: The Northeast Corridor had a big delay at Gunpow, east of Baltimore. At 7pm catenary power was lost on tracks 2 and 3 between Perryman and Gunpow when train 185 lost its pantograph. Passengers were transferred to train 187. The resulting congestion delayed trains 187, 285, 175, 125, 177, 143, 189, 126, 60, 90 and 66, with delays up to 4 hours. Power was restored at 10am the next day.

Almost every train leaving Chicago was delayed an hour or more, due to 20 below zero temperatures and high winds off the lake producing record wind-chill factors. Delays were due to such things as thawing frozen car doors and mechanical parts, signal failures, and slow turnarounds from delayed arriving trains.

The HOOSIER STATE, #318, became disabled at Monon IN and had to be rescued by two L&N freight engines, which first had to rescue a snowplow with engine failure. The train, with engine 303 and 3 cars, was delayed 5½ hours.

There were numerous relatively small train delays thruout the Midwest due to frozen car doors, switches, etc.

Train 381, the ILLINI, struck an abandoned car on the tracks at Manteno IL, 9 miles north of Kankakee, delaying the train 23mins.

The SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR departed Oakland with inoperable freezers and refrigerators, and a supply of dry ice instead. The train had come in the day before in that condition, but diner 38007 had not been repaired. Over $1000 worth of food had had to be discarded.

Federal Railroad Administration inspectors met the LAKE SHORE, train 49, at Syracuse and demanded that cars 4606 and 2924 be removed because of bad mechanical parts. Amtrak officials tried to keep sleeper 2924 on, but the FRA won out. Passengers had to be removed to coaches.

● JAN 11: The worst blizzard to hit upstate New York in 5 years caused the collapse of ground transportation in the Buffalo-Rochester area. All airports at Buffalo, Cleveland, Rochester and Syracuse were closed in the wake of 2 feet of snow and 6-foot drifts. All Amtrak Empire Service between Syracuse and Buffalo was annulled. Trains 48 and 74 terminated at Buffalo and passengers were housed. No. 64 terminated at Niagara Falls and was turned to become train 63. The original no. 63 terminated at Syracuse, and passengers for Toronto transferred to #69 at Albany to be sent to Montreal and thence by alternate transportation to Toronto. Train 449 ran Boston-Albany only, and #49 ran NY-Albany only, with the Albany-Chicago portion cancelled. Train 48 that left Chicago yesterday and terminated at Buffalo turned to become an on-time train 49 for today. Train 73 terminated at Syracuse, and #77 was cancelled entirely. Train 65 terminated at Syracuse and turned to become train 62 of Jan 12.

The SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR that left Oakland yesterday (dry ice and all) got over 6hrs behind because of severe weather that caused broken rails, CTC failures, etc. Connecting trains PIONEER and DESERT WIND left Ogden on time, and about 100 passengers from the SFZ were housed overnight in Ogden.

Due to severe weather, the BROADWAY LIMITED, train 40 was late almost 10hrs, and train 440 7'20" late. 140 chicken dinners were loaded onto #40 at Altoona.

The SOUTHWEST LIMITED that left L.A. Jan 9, with engines 292 & 282, had fuel line trouble near Osage City KS. A Santa Fe freight engine towed it to Topeka, where the line was temporarily repaired. Because of the engine failure and the subfreezing outside weather, the train interior temperature dropped to 33°. Passengers were removed at Topeka and taken to the Ramada Inn for hot coffee and pastries and then bused to Kansas City, where they rejoined the train, that presumably had now warmed up. Engine 331 was taken off train 342 at Kansas City and that train annulled.

The engine was added to #4 to help power it on to Chicago, leaving K.C. at 1:15pm.

Eight NE Corridor trains were delayed amounts of time varying from 15 to 65mins because of ice in a switch at Fulton, on the Baltimore division.

● JAN 12: The southbound ADIRONDACK, train 68, derailed the second car's lead wheels at Bluff Point NY, 3.2 miles south of Plattsburgh, when a 9½-foot section of track gave way under the train's weight. The train consisted of engine 345 and Amfleet cars 21184, 21029 and 20227. The engine and first car were able to resume the journey, and car 21029 was rerailed and the two remaining cars were picked up by the northbound train.

● JAN 13: Due to snow, ice and extreme termperatures on the NE Corridor, 26 trains were delayed from 6 to 105mins due to switch failures.

A minor grade crossing accident at Clearwater FL, with no injuries, delayed the SILVER METEOR, train 88, 24mins. Train was moving at 10mph. Another grade crossing collision delayed the ANN RUTLEDGE, train 303 by 31mins at Chatham IL. The auto driver was hospitalized.

The LAKE SHORE LIMITED, train 448, had engine 205 conk out 16.5 miles west of Pittsfield MA (see last issue, p. 8).

● JAN 14: A Conrail freight derailed three cars at 11:43am just outside the tunnel immediately south of the Baltimore station, causing delays ranging from 4 to 67mins to 28 Amtrak trains.

A bomb threat was reported to Amtrak police for train 584, a southbound SAN DIEGAN. It was stopped and searched at milepost 192.6 with a 48-min delay.

An ICG freight struck a truck at Woodstock TN and the crew was sent to a hospital because of contact with a chemical from the truck, possibly chlorine. The CITY OF NEW ORLEANS, train 58, was held 83mins until it was safe to proceed.

The SILVER STAR, train 91 of the 13th, with engine 649 and 7 cars, hit an unoccupied auto at a crossing south of West Palm Beach, delaying the train 15mins.

A UP freight derailed 2 cars 8 miles west of Cache Junction UT, blocking the single track and delaying the PIONEER, train 25 of Jan 12, 175mins.

● JAN 15: The Norwalk moveable bridge was stuck open between 2:39am and 7:30am. Frozen locks caused the problem. Train 145 was annulled between New Haven and New York and passengers used train 141 with a delay of 135mins. Train 66 was delayed 186mins at the bridge, train 61 was delayed 139mins at Devon and #190 was delayed at New York 20mins waiting for word to proceed. A makeup section of #145 left New York at 7:50am, 20mins late on its regular schedule.

Investigators concluded that the Conrail freight derailment of Jan 14 was due to a broken body side bearing plate on a freight car truck.

The EMPIRE BUILDER, train 7, was delayed an hour at St. Paul when a Milwaukee Road switcher derailed 3 cars in the yard. The switcher had to clear another track in the yard that train 7 could operate thru.

The temperature was 26 below zero in Chicago (with a high of 11 below), but Amtrak departures had only minimal delays in spite of thawing required, and only one train, the HOOSIER STATE, #318, departed over an hour late (65 mins), due to a leaky valve on Hi-level car 39934.

● JAN 16: A Conrail freight derailed 11 cars west of Rochester NY at 4:30pm. One track was opened at 2am on the 17th. Today's train 73, the EMPIRE STATE EXPRESS, and 65, the MOHAWK, detoured via the West Shore Branch, missing the Rochester stop. A bus for 17 passengers for #73 and two taxis for 7 passengers for #65 were used. Train 73 was delayed 108mins detouring, and train 65 216mins. Train 65's crew became in violation of the Hours of Service Act, and the train terminated at Buffalo-Depew. One passenger was taxied to Niagara Falls. Train 74 tomorrow will originate at Buffalo-Exchange St. after the equipment is brought from Depew and passengers taxied from Niagara Falls.

A Conrail freight derailed its caboose at Perryville MD on switches, blocking #3 track and delaying Amtrak trains 188, 66, 177 and 189. (Investigators later concluded that the derailment was caused by the train's speeding on an 8° curve.)

(continued on page 18)

SPEED IS BACK IN STYLE IN ILLINOIS

Velocity Revisited on the ICG

by F. K. Plous, Jr.

You'd never know of the return of the Main Line of Mid-America by the way No. 59, the CITY OF NEW ORLEANS, makes its way out of Chicago Union Station and over to ICG's track on the lakefront. As most Chicago railfans know, a backup move is necessary to get the CITY pointed in the right direction, and even when the nose is aimed indisputably toward Soldier Field the first 10 minutes of forward motion are fearfully inauspicious: The misaligned, freight-only track of the St. Charles Air Line keeps the speed at about 20mph and the ride lurching and creaky.

And then, suddenly, you break free. No. 59 rolls over Indiana Avenue on the Air Line's last viaduct, leans to the right and begins rolling down the ramp that connects the Air Line to the ICG proper. Points clatter as the double track meets the old alignment from IC's old Central Station, now demolished. The line rises briefly to clear the electrified suburban trackage passing under it, then drops again, providing the passenger train with a launching pad to destiny. Down, down, down we roll, picking up speed until we bottom out doing about 45mph and still climbing. The hogger lets out the throttle and the two GE P-30CH units, tied to nothing but a baggage car, a Pullman, a dinette and five Amcoaches, lunge forward like a hound catching the scent. By the time we reach 47th Street we are doing close to 70, and as the cars lean gently to the right we roll thru the curve by Hyde Park just as the Mainliners did in the old days. There is scarcely a ripple in the track. It is a bravura performance.

I confess I'm wary of reputed high-speed railroading these days. Those years of slow orders and rough track during the 70s have made me skeptical, sometimes downright cynical. Too often railroad PR men have invited me for rides over reportedly restored or rebuilt track only to admit under questioning that the restoration is incomplete, or that track once good for 80 is only being restored for a speed of 60, or that the ATS has been removed or the super-elevation cut from 6 inches down to three.

But on the ICG I was seldom disappointed. We slowed, as always, at Kensington; restoration of the interlocking there is not complete, but the abundance of new ties, rail and tie plates, along with a red-white-and-blue sign advising of an UMTA-sponsored rebuilding project, showed that the complex junction should soon be restored. And once thru the interlocking, the engineer let 'er rip again.

I was at the rear of the train now, watching the right of way and listening to the wheels. My impression is that while top speeds appear to be not quite as high as they were in the good old days, they are very close. Additionally, however, there is this matter of pickup, which is manifestly superior to what it was when E units and F units ruled the rails. To put it bluntly, those highly photogenic diesels of the 50s are no match for the accelerative powers of the re-geared freight units that serve as Amtrak's "passenger" engines today. As we stepped out of Kensington, No. 59, admittedly over-powered with those two P-30s up front, virtually shot forward. My only similar experience has been behind electrics in the Northeast Corridor.

Rolling south out of the suburban stop at Homewood, the same thing happened: bat-out-of-hell pickup to the maximum 79mph on rail as smooth as what I remembered from 1960. Smoother, maybe, because most of it is welded. It was satisfying, too, to see the suburban division's catenary now extended to Park Forest South, and to note that double-tracking of that pike has begun. I also got a bang out of the handsome tubular catenary poles that have been developed in the 55 years since the original electrification was installed.

Crossing Stuenkel Road, the first public grade crossing since Chicago, 59 slowed for a new interlocking that merges the two freight tracks leading from Markham yard into the passenger main. We were now on tracks used by ICG's unit coal and grain trains, but the 132-pound welded rail, the heavy ballast and the new ties showed little evidence of abuse. Time will tell how well the ICG maintains this stuff as the years take their toll, but for now it's a whole new railroad. And that's exactly how #59 treated it. We flew. Kankakee was achieved on time as we passed everything on adjacent U.S. 45 in a swirl of rooster-tailing dust, and pulling out again the two units tore away from the depot in another jackrabbit start.

What caused our hogger to put on a final display of throttle art in the 14 miles be-

tween Rantoul and Champaign I don't know. Perhaps it was simply the knowledge that he and the fireman would have to leave the train there and it was his last chance to display his talent. All I know is that we roared out of Rantoul so fast I thought the train was going to do a wheelie. We were probably doing 70 as we left the city limits, and as we passed Chanute Air Force Base I heard the wheels under the rear end of the last car begin to whine in that eerie rising pitch that says a train is going more than the posted speed limit of 79mph. At these speeds the flanges no longer touch the rails unless a lateral imperfection appears in the track--and the ICG seemed to have eliminated all such flaws. A tremendous wake of dust followed us down the track thru little Thomasboro, and as we passed Leverett Junction, the remote-controlled interlocking that forms the double-tracked entrance to Champaign Yard, we could well have been doing 90, altho I confess the impression of great speed was augmented by echo of our passage alongside the huge grain elevators lining the right of way there. Only as the last coach passed the yard office did the hogger "set 'em up." Budd's fabulous disc brakes took hold instantly, smoothly and securely, and in about a minute #59 was drifting across Champaign's Bradley Avenue with a great deal of ceremonious whoo-ing and tooting, as well as a certain amount of lurching and flange-squealing as the cars entered the still-unimproved track leading up the elevation to the depot.

Surprise! No. 391, the northbound SHAWNEE, was waiting on the No. 2 track as we arrived, loading a legion of University of Illinois students aboard its five Amcoaches, already half-filled with Southern Illinois University students who boarded at the train's starting point, Carbondale. Another surprise! Twentieth Century Railroad Club member Randy Rippy was on the platform waiting to board 391. We exchanged the Club grip and were halfway thru the second paragraph of the Club pledge when #59 began moving without warning, and I swung aboard in panic, bidding the best goodbye I could to Randy under the circumstances. We lurched, squealed a few times as the passenger tracks rejoined the freight main, then lit out for Carbondale over more restored track.

How fast we went I don't know, for it was dark. Between Champaign and Centralia lie the fastest 120 miles of track in the whole ICG system. There are no wayside block signals here except at interlockings. The whole pike is controlled by a continuous Automatic Train Stop installation that gives the engineer his reading over color-light signals in the cab. In the 1950s the ICG allowed the railroad to run its streamliners at 115mph here. By 1974, ICG's maintenance of way people had reduced much of it to 45mph, with occasional slow orders of 10mph.

Today it has been raised to 90mph for passenger trains, and, according to at least one crewman, hoggers making up time exceed that figure routinely and safely.

What our train did that night, however, I can't say. Even the most devoted railfan has to leave the rear vestibule occasionally to attend to other matters. For one thing, it was dark, and watching the track unroll had become a strain. For another, it was dinnertime. I realize Amtrak's microwave food cannot be expected to tear a railfan away from his Dutch-door duties, but we weren't planning to eat Amtrak's food, because we had brought our own--two orders of Greek chicken with rice and green beans to go purchased just before departure from a Grecian spoon in the Loop. A couple of singles to the attendant gave us the use of the Amdinette's microwaves, and in two minutes we were tearing into a dinner that tasted better than what Amtrak had on its own menu.

Lulled by our repast, some beverages and a pair of new-found friends, we let the miles fly by without attention. Almost too soon, it seemed, we were in Carbondale. The ride was smooth all the way save for the occasional interlocking or grade crossing, many of which were left for later during the first spate of rebuilding on the ICG main.

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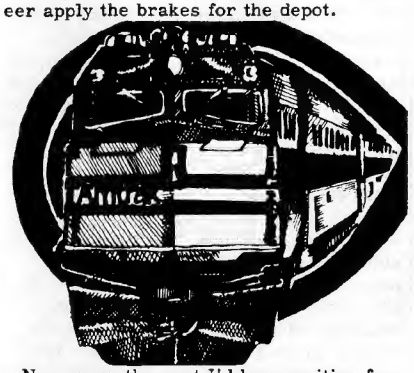
Three days later, however, we got to cover the same stretch in daylight on 391, and now the story of the Main Line of Mid-America's restoration became manifest.

The SHAWNEE left Carbondale at precisely 4pm on a brilliant and cloudless Monday, a single F40 PH followed by two Amcoaches and an Amcafe. After settling ourselves at the rear of the cafe car, I proceeded to the rear door and watched our little train scamper north just as handily as #59 had left Chicago. Acceleration: sensational. Top speed: 79. As far as I could see, both tracks had been rebuilt virtually to top-of-the-line standards. Over many stretches the ballast was freshly dumped and still covered the ties.

Three freights passed us southbound before we reached Centralia. About six miles south of Centralia something happened--I don't know what. The train slowed, stopped, waited, then started again, but never got over about 40mph. I fretted and fidgeted, and my inquiries to the crew went unanswered. We dawdled like this for 10 or 15 minutes. Then, suddenly, whatever obstacle had been ahead of us got out of the way, the hogger cracked open the throttle, and we tore thru the south edge of Centralia and past the vast Centralia shops at 79 or better, a long ribbon of swirling dust in our wake. It was particularly exciting to shoot past the shops, for the main line divides at the south end of the complex, the northbound track continuing on straight while the southbound track warps around the west edge of the shops and then rejoins at the north end. Only as we met the south main again did the engineer apply the brakes for the depot.



Now came the part I'd been waiting for, our northbound dash over the 90mph ATS section to Champaign. Formally, the fast track doesn't begin until Branch Junction, really no more than a hand-throw switch a couple miles north of Centralia where the "original" spine of the Illinois Central from Galena and Dixon meets the "supplementary" main that was added to the railroad later when it appeared that the little village of Chicago might amount to something. It is at Branch Junction that the tracks curve to a northeastern heading, and it was precisely at that point that the engineer gave #391 everything he had. It turned out to be plenty.

I know because as I looked out the rear door I could see a guy on a Harley-Davidson Sprint motorcycle cracking his throttle open on the highway paralleling our train. Not many things pass a Harley up, and for a minute or two it looked as if #391 wasn't going to either. But then the F40 took hold as the wide-open right of way beckoned, and the Harley, hemmed in by autos and rough pavement, dropped farther and farther behind. The trucks beneath the coach began to hum, the ties blended into a chocolatey blur, and the rooster tail gres higher and thicker, and the spirals of dust that shaped it grew more violent. Borrowing April's watch, I began hunting for mileposts, and in three or four minutes I had a series of readings showing me we were doing 90mph --maybe a little more.

I won't say the coffee didn't ripple in the cup. The ICG, however well-restored, is not the Shinkansen, the French TGV or even Amtrak's Northeast Corridor, where speeds of 110 or 120 are now possible on newly-aligned passenger-only track.

What it is is a pretty fair example of something I'll have to call "holistic railroading," a piece of track that can handle a unit coal train at 45mph, a passenger train at 90, and a piggyback merchandiser at 65 or 70. It can't handle any of those trains optimally, of course; the SHAWNEE should have been doing 110 and ideally the intermodal should be moving at about 85 or 90, but the fact is that the track can handle three classes of radically different traffic without, apparently, undergoing any undue suffering.

April claimed the ride was rough, too rough for her to study her Aristotle and Chinese history properly. There was too much lurch and sway, she said, and I would have to agree. But all the distortions in the track were lateral; there were none of those low joints I remember from 1975, with their horrifying, hemorrhoid-shattering slamming on bare earth. Essentially, the track felt safe if not entirely comfortable. The only exceptions were at Tuscola and Tolono, where the diamonds over the Missouri Pacific and Norfolk & Western had not yet been undercut and reballasted. We slowed to about 20 for each one, and the trucks slammed violently against the ground even at that speed. But as soon as we cleared Tolono the hogger let out his throttle one more time and finished his dash into Champaign at close to 100mph.

It was anticlimactic after that. Darkness fell, making observation impossible, and the speed limit in the non-ATS territory north of Champaign returned to 79, altho the track there is clearly safe for 90 or better. There were no problems, and the SHAWNEE pulled into Chicago Union Station a good 20 minutes ahead of schedule, something the crew said is not unusual these days.

Oh, and by the way, I did say PULLED into Union Station. For a reason that was not entirely clear to me, the SHAWNEE does not perform a precise reverse of its wye procedure when returning to Chicago. Instead, it pulls across the river to Union Avenue Tower, then backs thru the south leg of the wye and emerges with its head end toward the depot, which it enters, as God intended, locomotive first. Thus, April and I returned to Chicago not only 20 minutes early, but without the humiliation so often experienced by passengers who know there's something terribly wrong about the way their train is entering the station. It was a good feeling, and for this U of I alumnus with a head full of high-speed memories it was particularly satisfying to learn that after 15 years in limbo, speed is back in style.

EASTWARD, HO, ON BOARD THE PIONEER
by Glenn Lee

"The Almighty does not subtract from a man's allotted hours the time spent fishing," Herbert Hoover once said. I believe that the same applies to time spent soaking in hot springs, and thus it's natural to seek out one of the best for vacation time--the big one at Glenwood Springs, Colorado. In the late fall, it's best of all--a study in the moods of megamellow.

Until 1977, getting there was a pain if travel began in the Pacific Northwest, but now we have the PIONEER, and its precarious lease on life seems to be improving, if my late October ride was any indication.

The eastward trek began at Hinkle, Oregon, where a little glass box finally has been installed to provide shelter denied intending passengers following Union Pacific's conversion of the former depot waiting room to a communications facility. In palmier days, I had traveled to and from Hinkle on UP trains 19-20, often referred to as the "City of Hinkle" by the enthusiasts. They are long gone, as are many other of the best features of UP domeliner service; but if it's a warm Sunday afternoon and if the leaves are yellowing gracefully and a slight breeze is blowing, then travel can't be all that bad, even if it is Amtrak Year X.

I was on the platform waiting shortly after 3:15pm, and within five minutes the PIONEER's whistling could be heard to the west. Fast, and ahead of schedule. A rustle swept thru a crowd of approximately 20 people, and within moments the shiny equipment flashed to a stop: locomotive 217, sleeper 2993 "Pine Gorge", ex-Santa Fe Hi-level coach-dorm 39917, Sightseer lounge 33021, Superliner coaches 31001, coach-baggage 34068 (all of these for Salt Lake City), and 34068, the "thru" coach for Chicago which will be switched to the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR at Ogden in the wee hours of the following dawn.

We were directed to the door of 31001, and instantly four employees appeared--the classic curse of railroading portrayed once again in a poignant tableau--three uniformed UP trainmen (a conductor and two brakemen) and a coach porter. After some discussion, those for Salt Lake City, including myself, were told to walk forward to the ex-Santa Fe car. Irritating momentarily for the passenger not fully aware of seating arrangements, but a smart move designed to make the long-haul, legrest seats of the ex-Santa Fe car available to the long-haul passenger, and reserve the seats in the coach-baggage car, with shorter legroom, for the short-haul passengers.

It's clear that in centralized traffic control territory (which means most of the UP route) the two train brakemen are unnecessary, and their presence on board the PIONEER only serves to increase operating costs. If someone must leave the train to throw a switch, one of the enginemen can do it forward, and the conductor can do it rear. The passengers won't riot if the conductor temporarily leaves the train. The coach porters will still be there to keep order.

We were a few minutes behind leaving Hinkle, and stopped again for a few moments about a mile east of the depot. Alongside were maintenance-of-way cars painted such a shiny silver that for a moment or two they seemed to eclipse the shininess of Amtrak's newest. A quick whistle salute to the nearby engine terminal, and we were underway, soon twisting and turning alongside the Umatilla River, and drawing ever closer to the beautiful Blue Mountains to the east and southeast.

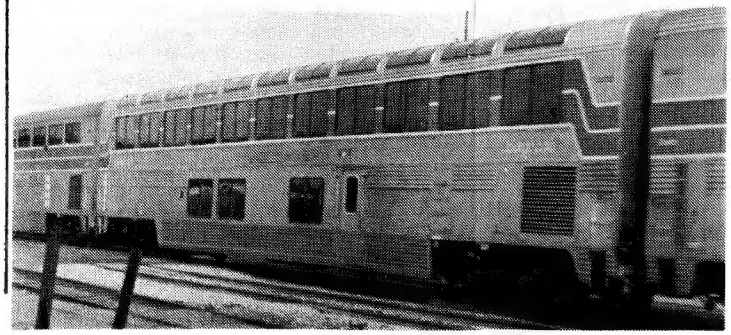
This is the point where the newly boarded passenger can begin to relax. There's a lot to see. Looking up the small side canyons, it's easy to spot a thick white layer of sediment which looks like chalk. It's Mazama Ash, fallout from the massive volcanic explosion which formed Crater Lake in southern Oregon 6,600 years ago. Some scientists say as much as 40 cubic miles of material were ejected in the mighty blast, and others suggest it may have been as much as 60 cubic miles, based on samples of ash found as far east as Saskatchewan in Canada, and Nebraska in the U.S. Comparatively, the May 18, 1980 blast of Mount St. Helens was quite small, with only 1-1 1/2 cubic miles of material blown skyward.

The specter of volcanoes past contrasted beautifully with the warm, pleasant afternoon. Soon I was engaging in another traveling avocation--looking for the "perfect swimming hole," of which there may be many alongside the PIONEER route west of Pendleton.

Union Pacific is improving the line constantly. Near Nolin, a curve has been eased, and at 4:07pm we noted a maintenance-of-way train in the siding for us to pass.

This was a pleasant time to inspect the new Sightseer lounge car, billed as the crowning glory of Amtrak's Superliner order of 284 cars. The Sightseer cars, at over $1.3 million apiece, make a good impression on the average passenger, but leave something to be desired when compared with the masterpieces of yesteryear such as the Great Northern full-length domes from the EMPIRE BUILDER, or the SP three-quarter domes from the SHASTA DAYLIGHT of 1955.

The Sightseers have a good ride, and their neutral color schemes have been instrumental in avoiding the garishness of earlier Amtrak interior decoration. With less than a full load on this trip, the Sightseer lounge was a pleasant haven of relaxation and gentility. However, under no circumstances is the Sightseer a replacement for the dome car, as there is no forward or rearward observation. Because the passenger's face is farther from the glass than in a dome car, he cannot truly experience the scenery as with a dome. Amtrak officials should come to grips with reality and recognize this; and should be placing all-electric Vista-dome cars ahead of each Santa Fe "stepdown" car in Superliner trains. Even when there isn't much to see, the Vista-domes sell a lot of tickets, as UP readily admitted in the late 1950s after placing "Astra-Dome" cars by ACF and Pullman-Standard on a number of major trains, including the CITY OF PORTLAND which operated over the route of today's PIONEER between Pocatello and Portland.



A Sightseer car was making its first trip on the PIONEER, replacing the Amdinette. RTN photo.

The Sightseers have a lot of waste space upstairs, as the top deck is designed to be more a lounge than a viewing area. The downstairs also is not well-designed, with the worst feature being the passageway around the piano-bar area, which reduces seating capacity as well as giving the area a crowded feeling. That may be good for a New York basement nightclub, but not for long distance trains across the open West.

Due at Pendleton at 4:10pm, we arrived 4:16, with another 20 passengers or so boarding. There was a delay, with departure at 4:33, some 23 minutes late. At 4:25 we stopped and moved backwards toward the depot. A few questions revealed that a woman had boarded in Pendleton and was attempting to travel without a ticket. A small group peered from the door of the Santa Fe coach to the rear as she finally was ejected from the PIONEER.

"Are they being diplomatic?" I asked one of the audience.

"Well, the woman is crying," came the reply.

A few whistle toots, and we were off again, economic justice having been applied to the stowaway attempt.

East of Pendleton the scenery becomes more intimate, as the Blue Mountains close in from the southeast. Today the mountains were yellow and brown, as wheatlands and grassy open spaces dominated. The forested sections looked green. The Blues are not the massive, rugged peaks which dominate so much of the Northwest's scenery, but rather are old, folded hills highly uplifted--soft, smooth, rounded, with little evidence showing of the rugged winters which regularly course the higher elevations.

A few miles east of Pendleton, we passed over a line change which had been under construction in late 1978, eliminating reverse curves at a narrows in the river bottom. Coal trains are coming ever more frequently and coal movements abhor curvature. The new straightened line is a bonus for passengers--a smoother ride on silent, heavy duty rail.

The sun was setting behind us now, and the countryside took on a slightly surrealistic hue--were all those colors iridescent? Pheasants flew by. Trout lurked in deep pools. At 4:57pm we passed Gibbon and turned from an easterly course to one heading almost straight south. Now it was

up the long pull to the summit at Kamela. It's a tough pull for UP. Pendleton is 1,069 feet above sea level, and Kamela is 4,205 feet. It's 53 miles, with the toughest distance between Duncan and Kamela, about 33 miles.

At 5:02pm passengers spotted a crew replacing rail at Bonifer siding, a few miles above Gibbon. Plenty of work to do before winter snows make maintenance work almost impossible. At 5:23pm we passed Camp siding, where the line turns west. For several minutes before arrival there, a strange glow covered the train. We were in shadow, as the sun had set more than an hour before, at the bottom of the canyon. But on the open hillside above the PIONEER to the east, golden grasslands reflected a magnificent hue. It seemed in the mind's eye that the train was progressing upward toward a distant pyramid-shaped mountain that was made of gold. It wasn't that way, of course, but an illusion the passengers obtained because they could not see straight forward. Surely this was one of the most beautiful crossings of the Blues ever made by any passenger train.

But at Camp, as we turned west, this spell ended, and Amtrak got down to the serious business of cresting the Blues. At 5:42pm we passed a substantial construction project. UP is eliminating a series of sharp reverse curves in rugged terrain near Meacham station--again to provide easier passage for coal trains. At 5:44pm we passed a westbound freight with four units on the point, including two SP units, and four units cut in mid-train. At 5:55pm we heard the o.k. whistle signalling the air brake test was successful, and began the grinding descent toward La Grande, in the dynamic brake mode.

Near the summit, it again seemed lighter in the early evening, and another slightly surrealistic phenomenon of the fall stepped to the fore--the golden filigree lace-like colors of the larch trees, preparing for winter. For several miles the larch are a major component of the climax community, protected on the east side of the Blues from the harsh afternoon sun, and situated in a colder climate, more frequently dominated by the continental cold air masses.

For perhaps 20 minutes or more we seemed to be passing thru a larch-dominated world designed and drawn by Walt Disney cartoonists as they might prepare it on one of their more inspired days. The scene became a beautiful "light show" in the fading daylight as we dropped toward La Grande on the steep grade. Motanic siding slipped by at 6pm, Hilgard at 6:12pm, and a few miles farther, evidence of an old grade with sharp curves, and a bridge abandoned in favor of a new, easier-to-operate alignment.

At 6:25pm, another westbound freight, and at 6:28pm we came to a stop at the La Grande depot, one of UP's more impressive small depots, still ornate with "Overland Route" inscriptions in the brickwork below the eaves.

It's almost two hours by train from Pendleton to La Grande, because of the long "S" curve described by the railway to avoid the heavy grades on the west face of the Blues. The I-84 Interstate highway has several miles of dangerous 7 percent grade constructed to achieve the shortest distance, by contrast.

Yet some changes may be coming. A few rail observers have hinted in the last few years that UP has dusted off plans for a low-level tunnel thru the Blues. One possible alignment, from a point near Camp siding near the 3,000-foot level, would cut straight south to the side canyon above Hilgard siding. Such a tunnel might be nine miles or more, or equal to the new 9.1-mile tunnel soon to be built by CP Rail under Rogers Pass, between Golden and Revelstoke, B.C. A low-level tunnel thru the Blues not only would reduce the summit elevation by 1,200 feet or more, but would also shorten the line substantially, eliminate heavy snow problems, and as a by-product would reduce the PIONEER's running time by about 30 minutes. That's something to think about if the nation gets off its highway and air-travel kick, and decides to invest its ever-scarcer transportation tax dollars more wisely.

The PIONEER carried 114 passengers into La Grande, 108 in coaches and six in the sleeper. That is a substantial improvement over the loadings in my previous trip in Nov 1978, when the count was 38.

We departed La Grande at 6:40pm, or 5 minutes late, and now it was time to attempt some dinner. That was to be a major problem. This was the Sightseer car's first trip on the PIONEER, having replaced the Amdinette which had been standard since inauguration in 1977. The Amdinette was returned to the Amfleet pool supposedly to allow release of Amdinettes for the new SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA.

The attendant in the food bar at the forward end of the lower section didn't like it at all. He complained noisily several times about what a rotten car it was to work. Nothing seemed to be right for him. The attendant seemed to have become increasingly animated thru the afternoon, and eventually appeared to be an agitated figure from the "Taxi" TV series. The three booths near the food bar all were taken. Booth 1 was occupied by four National Geographic types, who sat thru the dinner hour, cameras dripping from their countenances, discussing trips of yore while failing to make very

(continued on page 19)

Mixed Train of Thoughts

THE NORTHBOUND MONTREALER, train 60, derailed at Smith Ferry MA, near Holyoke, 10.5 miles north of Springfield, at 1:15am on Feb 14. Train 60, with two engines and 8 cars, including a slumbercoach and 10/6 sleeper, was traveling at 37mph in a 40mph area when the second locomotive and all 8 cars derailed, blocking the single-track line. The 155 passengers and crew were evacu ated by six 4-wheel drive vehicles from the fairly inaccessible derailment scene. Four passengers and one crew member had minor injuries. One woman was admitted to Holyoke Hospital but released the next day. Uninjured passengers were taken to Marty's Lounge in Holyoke. The derailed cars were leaning badly but did not turn over, and remained in line. The southbound #61 was terminated at Northampton MA, where it was turned to become train 60. The 191 passengers and crew from train 61 were bused to Springfield to board a makeup train 61, composed of the equipment of train 143, the MOUNT VERNON. Complimentary meals were given to passengers of both affected trains. Train 61 passengers were delayed 174mins, train 60 riders were set back 6 hours. The derailment, on a 5° curve, came at about the same spot at which a B&M freight derailed in 1979, and in fact the truck panels from that derailment were still sitting at the side of the track.....

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AMTRAK FAMILY DAYS began in Albuquerque Feb 19, and opened to the public on the 20th. NARP reported that Secretary of Transportation Drew Lewis, Amtrak President Alan Boyd, and New Mexico's two senators, Jack Schmitt and Pete Domenici were on hand Feb 19. All four officials seemed "upbeat" about Amtrak's chances for survival. DOT Secretary Lewis was reported "surprised and very pleased" at how nice the Superliner cars are (had he never seen them before?). He praised Boyd as the "best manager" Amtrak has ever had. Boyd and the two senators were to return to Albuquerque on Feb 20 for the public event.....

AMTRAK'S FOOD SERVICE in dining cars is expected to be standardized by about March 1. Amtrak's new approved plan will have a dinner menu with six selections: short ribs of beef, chicken, seafood, lasagne, turkey and spaghetti. The fresh breakfast items and the soup and salad lunch selections developed on the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR and the LAKE SHORE LIMITED are included in the new service. The six pre-prepared dinner items will be heated in convection ovens, not microwave ovens.....

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RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR was the subject of an approximately 10-minute report on NBC's "Today" TV show the morning of Feb 9. This was an extremely well-done documentary that covered all aspects of the train's operation, and included unrehearsed comments and reactions of passengers riding in domes thru the famous Rio Grande scenery. After the program, travel agents reported a sudden upswing in ticket orders for the scenic domeliner. Incidentally, the Rio Grande raised fares on the train in February about 14.5%--to about $71 for the complete route between Denver and Ogden.....

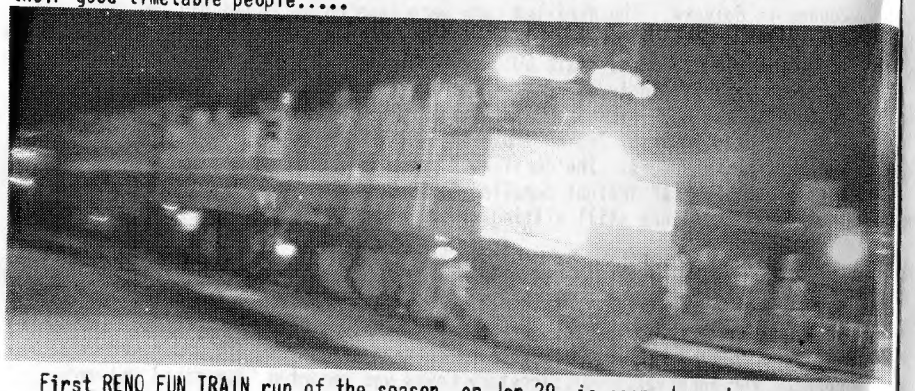
AMTRAK'S SENIOR CITIZEN and handicapped special fares are now applicable only to roundtrips, not to one-way tickets. This change was made in February.....

AMTRAK'S ALAN BOYD was the keynote speaker at the 100th anniversary celebration of the Columbus and Greenville Railway in Mississippi on Feb 13.....

THE SILVER STAR as of this writing still has one of its four equipment sets steam-heated conventional cars. Some railfan publications have erroneously reported that all have been electrified.....

THE MICHIGAN EXECUTIVE is scheduled to make its last trip on March 31. The train is to be discontinued because the state's DOT is withdrawing its 403-b support. Ridership of the Detroit-Jackson service has dropped from 250 per trip to 86 in the past year, reflecting economic hardships in the Detroit area, according to Michigan's ARP. The Michigan attorney-general recently ruled that the state legislature cannot tell the state DOT how to spend its money, and thus it cannot save the train that way. The state is also ending its passenger service aid program on board Amtrak trains, effective Feb 28.....

DEPARTMENT OF TIMETABLE ERRORS: Another error spotted in Amtrak's current (Oct-Apr) systemwide timetable: On the system map on pages 30-31, the numerals "34" appear superimposed on the Kentucky-Virginia boundary, where they formerly were placed to index the CARDINAL route, which does not appear in the timetable (the CARDINAL was reinstated Jan 8). An Amtrak person who asked not to be named commented that the reason for so many timetable errors is that Amtrak fires all their good timetable people.....



First RENO FUN TRAIN run of the season, on Jan 29, is seen above in an after-dark electronic flash shot leaving Oakland and speeding thru Berkeley CA. The train, powered by two F40 engines, consists of Hi-level and Superliner cars. (See Cars & Consists, p. 20, for a typical consist.) RTN photo.....

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PATRONAGE IS LOW, an Amtrak spokesman admitted, and that fact seems related to the current recession. NARP called upon members to "please ride the trains", noting that ridership is "unusually low" except for good reports about the CARDINAL, CRESCENT and the express Metroliners. Amtrak pointed out that airline patronage is very low also.....

"BULLET TRAIN" STUDY of the Los Angeles-San Diego route should be completed by the end of March, as should a separate marketing study of the line that Amtrak is having performed by Arthur D. Little. After that study by Japanese National Railways engineers, the focus will shift to the Miami-Orlando-Tampa route in Florida. Florida's Governor Bob Graham has stated that Bullet Trains would be a possible use of $10 billion in loans that private Japanese investors are planning to make to some individual states, according to a NARP report.....

MEXICAN RAILWAY OFFICIALS will visit San Antonio TX in early March to talk about forming a direct rail passenger link between Mexico City and San Antonio. San Antonio officials went to the Mexican capital Feb 8 to begin talks on this subject. MoPac representatives will be invited to the March meeting.....

THE REAGAN BUDGET for Amtrak for the next fiscal would derail the 403-b trains in California--the SAN JOAQUINS, SAN DIEGANS (three of them) and the SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA--according to Congressman Robert Matsui of Sacramento. The proposed budget calls for elimination of Amtrak's portion of state-supported service. Said Matsui: "It really is a tragedy that this important train service is threatened with elimination just months after it was begun (referring to the SPIRIT OF

CALIFORNIA). We will do what we can to try to restore the money, but this administration seems intent on destroying our rail passenger system".....

A NORTHBOUND MONTREALER passenger rode from Montpelier Junction to Waterbury VT, a distance of 10 miles, hanging onto the rear exterior of the last coach, on Jan 11, early on a cold morning. He had detrained at Montpelier and stood on the platform until he saw the train pulling out. Then, evidently panicking, he ran down the platform after the train, jumped onto the stirrup of the last car and hung onto the grabirons. The Amtrak agent at the station saw this drama and called the Central Vermont Railway dispatcher, but the railway was unable to make radio contact with the train. When the train stopped at Waterbury, the passenger jumped down and entered the train by an open vestibule door. The train crew sent for an ambulance, and the rider was taken to St. Albans Memorial Hospital for treatment of exposure, and was later released.....

THE NORTHBOUND CRESCENT derailed when it ran into a mudslide near Rockfish VA, in the Blue Ridge Mountains about 22.5 miles south of Charlottesville. There were no injuries reported. We do not have the full story on this accident, which occurred Feb 19, presumably around 7am. Wire photos showed the lead engine derailed and tilting to the right. The second engine appears to be unaffected. Passengers were bused from the train, which halted along a steep embankment but did not go over it.....

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THE BROADWAY LIMITED and the CAPITOL LIMITED are likely to have a route alteration in the near future, but probably not before the late April timetable change. The change, which would be west of Pittsburgh, may mean running Pittsburgh-Cleveland-Toledo-Chicago or Pittsburgh-Lima-Fort Wayne-South Bend-Chicago. And Conrail is seeking to have the FRA allow it to downgrade 224 miles of its line between Bucyrus OH and Valparaiso IN, on the route of the BROADWAY LIMITED thru Ft. Wayne. NARP said that Congressmen Coates and Benjamin from that area are trying to prevent this move. In Fiscal 1981 Amtrak had 25,600 patrons from that area.....

THE ARIZONA DOT is holding a public meeting in Phoenix on Feb 22 to discuss the proposed passenger train service, state-supported, between Tucson, Phoenix and Los Angeles (in addition to the SUNSET LIMITED). A previous ADOT report had concluded that the costs of supporting such service would be excessive ($220 per passenger Phoenix-L.A.), but ADOT planners are thinking about possible alternatives to Amtrak service, such as a "privately-operated train".....

HANFORD, CALIFORNIA AMTRAK station was robbed on Jan 10 while the agent there was busy seeing the SAN JOAQUIN, train 708, thru. About $250 was taken.....

A PASSENGER ON the VERRAZANO, corridor train 184, on Jan 10 was told by the conductor that the train doesn't stop at BWI Rail Station in Maryland, altho Amtrak headquarters says it does (the current system timetable doesn't show it stopping there). The conductor put him off at Beltway Station to await the next train. The passenger, who said the conductor was quite rude, complained, and Amtrak arranged to have the next train, train 176, the MERCHANTS LIMITED, stop at BWI to pick him up, an hour after he'd been detrained.....

THE SAN DIEGO City Council on Feb 8 by a 5-4 vote rejected an offer from Caltrans to buy the Santa Fe (Amtrak) station in that city in a partnership with the city and turn it into a transportation center. The Council opted instead to let Santa Fe retain it and possibly turn it into a commercial development with private funding.....

THE FRENCH TGV line is experiencing a 68% load factor on the Lyon main line and an 80% load factor on the Geneva "branch." Earlier, the French Railways had predicted 65%.....

BRITAIN'S RAIL STRIKE ended the morning of Feb 18 after five weeks, with the striking engineers getting a 3% pay increase, contingent on productivity improvements. Public sentiment was reported strongly in favor of more flexibility in work hours of the train operators, and even other rail unions apparently took the

management position that more productivity could be obtained. During the strike, British Rail had been shut down three days each week, including Sunday....

SOUTHERN PACIFIC CHAIRMAN Ben Biaggini is expected to travel between Oakland and Los Angeles Feb 23 in the shiny business car "Sunset" (above) on the rear of the SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA. It will mark the first time that the SP Chairman has tried out the new overnight service. Photo by George Hyko....

THE BURLINGTON NORTHERN gets a new president effective Apr 1--he is Walter A. Drexel, and he takes the place of Richard C. Grayson, who is promoted to Chairman of the railroad and Chief Executive Officer of the BN Inc. Transportation Group..... CONRAIL HAS REGISTERED a profit of $26.4 million for the last quarter of 1981, as opposed to a loss of $12 million for the same period of 1980...

SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA carried private car "City of Cleveland" from Los Angeles to Oakland on Feb 11.....

THE MAPLE LEAF, the joint Amtrak-VIA New York to Toronto train, is the subject of an informative article by Andrew H. Malcolm in the NYTimes of Feb 14.....

AMTRAK SAID THAT the proposed federal budget of $600 million for the next fiscal year is not enough to "provide for a national passenger rail system". Amtrak made this statement on Feb 5, at the time the budget was leaked to the press, according to a New Orleans Times-Picayune Washington bureau reporter..... SOUTHBOUND CITY OF NEW ORLEANS derailed at 5am Feb 8 near Salem IL with ten minor injuries. The last 5 of 9 cars derailed at 90mph..... News in this issue is updated thru Feb 20, 1982.

THE PANIC BOX (continued from page 8)

Crossing accidents: The DESERT WIND, #36, was hit by an auto at Wann NV, the four occupants of which were killed; the train was delayed 3hrs. The SILVER STAR, #81, hit an auto at Skelton VA, which had driven around crossing gates. There were no injuries. The PIONEER, #25, hit an abandoned auto at Kaysville UT, with no injuries but a 50mins delay. Train 81 was delayed 80mins.

The temperature was still frigid in Chicago, and there were frozen switches. Some trains left on time, but the following were delayed over 100mins: #381, #354, #318, #21, #347, #59, and #40; the worst delay was to the SFZ, train 5--275mins (this was because of late-arriving engines and no crew available to move the train into the station).

The ILLINI #380 left Decatur late because of the late arrival of #381 and the need for the crew to take a break. It was then delayed 214mins between Decatur and Tolono by extreme cold and drifting snow, and on the ICG by switch and signal failures. An ICG engine was added at Champaign. The N&W then shut down because of the weather, and train 381 terminated at Champaign with no alternate

transportation. Train 381 was using #365's equipment because of the lateness of 380, which normally turns at Chicago.

A mud slide between Everett and Seattle (MP 27) blocked both track between 8:15 and 9:15am, delaying the EMPIRE BUILDER of Jan 14 47mins.

The LAKE SHORE, train 49, left NY 134mins late due to engine problems.

Frozen switches delayed the FORT PITT'S (#38) departure from Pittsburgh 165".

The CARDINAL, train 51, was delayed 101mins by a Chessie freight with brakes stuck on at Oxford OH.

The BANKERS, train 141, had no food service from Springfield to New York because Amfleet car 20130 was frozen; a new food car was added at New York.

There were 125 standees on train 391 today, and 60 on train 170. National Airport at Washington was closed part of the morning, and 150 passengers were turned away from the COLONIAL, train 150, because of lack of space.

Someone failed to turn on a switch in Amclub car 20675 on the MINUTE MAN, #168, and there was no heat in the car from Washington to NY and no food.

THE PIONEER (continued from page 14)

much of trip present. Booth 2 was taken by a young mother and her small ones, and she found this a good place to change diapers. Booth 3 was the lair of a clearly inebriated 55ish man who preyed first on senior citizens and then young girls. He was a traveling salesman for children's shoes, and once in his clutches, passengers had a difficult time getting away. This left no place to eat, so I gave up and returned to my coach seat.

One hour later I returned to find the loungies had cleared out, but now the food bar was closed. So I waited, and waited, and finally had what was a very poor dinner about 8:40pm. The "What's it gonna be, Mac?" attitude seemed a flashback to the rude people who used to afflict Jack Benny on his radio and TV program, and unfortunately seemed to typify all too frequently Amtrak in our time. A sullen thought for an empty stomach, and a mind once filled by dinner in the UP dome dining car on the same right of way. There really must be a moral here for contemporary U.S. civilization, but as darkness closed about the PIONEER, I lacked capacity to determine what that moral might be.

Huntington, not listed in the passenger timetable, is a regular stop for crew change. We arrived 9:40pm and departed 6 minutes later, and slipped away for the flatlands of southern Idaho en route to Boise.

High speed. Train noises. Silver high cars whirling thru the night. A brief stop at Ontario, and again at Nampa, where the PIONEER diverges from the main line to traverse the "Boise cutoff" to the state capital. UP removed the block signals on the cutoff with the coming of Amtrak and the end of passenger service thru Idaho and Oregon. The track seemed to have deteriorated in the interim also, and we bounced along at intermediate speed, like an inter-urban poking along thru the brush. It's slow going, but we finally stopped at the beautiful Boise depot. I darted off for a quick look thru the waiting room. Just checking, as if it were MY waiting room. It looked o.k., except that the water fountains didn't work.

Back on board, and then off thru the night. The post-teenager from Seattle sitting in front of me said he regretted traveling to Salt Lake thru the night. I agreed that it was too bad, as he missed a lot of the beauty of the desert in southern Idaho.

"There's a desert in southern Idaho?" he asked with great surprise.

"Yes, quite a lot of it," I replied, murmuring to myself mentally that such a reply is perhaps natural from one who has lived too long in Seattle. "The rain does it to 'em," I thought, and drifted to sleep just after we passed Orchard, where the Boise Cutoff joins the main line to the east.

BOOM--Shortly after 3am I was awake in an instant to see the locomotive of the westbound PIONEER flash past at very high speed. I calculated that he was late. Whoosh--and the last car sped by in an instant. A quick wakeup to check at Pocatello, and back to sleep.

Crash-batter-bam and we were passing over the noisy trackwork just north of Ogden. It was 6:25am and we were early. I eyeballed the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR alongside and went back to sleep.

In an instant it was 7:45am and the porter woke me up. "Salt Lake coming up" he said, and like Cinderella's carriage we were at the big UP depot at the foot of South Temple Street 25 minutes early. Due at 8:15am, we pulled in at 7:50. Only a small crowd milled away from the train, including the post-teenager from Seattle who was visiting relatives in Salt Lake. I could only hope he would be able to see some desert on his trip, if that's what he missed traveling on board the PIONEER.

I had 23 hours and 40 minutes to go before leaving for the hot springs on the RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR.

CARS & CONSISTS

*SILVER METEOR, train 87, NY-Florida Feb 2: engines 972 (NY-DC), 382 (DC-Jacksonville), 384 (DC-St. Pete); cars 1262, 1626, 4648, 4647, 4008, 4646, 8508, 3112, 4005, 4012, 4018, 4641, 2437, 2093, 2433, 2436, 10,000 (last two cars for Alan Boyd and staff to Florida).

*PATRIOT, train 170, DC-Boston Jan 31: engines 920 (DC-New Haven), 209 (New Haven-Boston); cars 21025, 21096, 20047 Amcafe, 21030, 21141, 21242.

*SHORELINER, train 151, Boston-NY Jan 29: engine LRC unit 39 (Boston-New Haven), 923 (New Haven-NY); cars LRC cars 43, 48, 44, 40.

*SUNSET LIMITED, train 1, Sanderson TX Feb 13: engines 719, 711 (P-30s); cars 1160, Hi-level 39905, Superliners 32008, 38008, Hi-level lounge 39971, Superliners 31030, 34071, (EAGLE cars from Chicago:) 34056, 32012, (deadheads from New Orleans:) buffer car 10601, Auto-Train big domes 523 (to Great Western Tours), 514 (to Western Rail Services).

*CRESCENT, train 19, New York-New Orleans Feb 10: engines 959 (NY-DC), 259 & 257 (DC-New Orleans); cars 1167, 1622, 4640, 4002, 4638, 4628, 4624, 3125, 8512, 2452, 2889, (NY-DC:) 20031, 21012, 21179, (Atlanta-New Orleans:) Auto-Train domes 523, 514.

*SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR, train 5, Chicago Feb 3: engines CNW 412 & 419, Amtrak 313 & 319; cars 1248, 1227, Hi-level 39914, Superliners 32035, 32048, 38020, 33002, 31015, 34062, 34082, 34014, 32005.

*SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA, train 18, Sacramento Feb 12: engine 231; cars 1128, 2988 "Pine Dale", 2991 "Beatrice V. McDonald", 20225 Amdinette, 21887, 21851, 21849.

*RENO FUN TRAIN (northbound), Sacramento Feb 12: engines 244, 284; cars Hi-levels 39945, 39944, 39940, 39949, Superliners 34014, 33017, 38012, Hi-levels 39948, 39947, 39964, 39952.

*SOUTHWEST LIMITED, train 4, L.A.-Chicago Feb 2: engines 293, 285; cars 1228, 1248, Hi-level 39929, Superliners 31016, 34006, 33015, 38013, 32023, 32013, ATSF 53 (L.A.-Chic.), ATSF 51 (Albuquerque-Chic.), ATSF 54 (LaJunta-Topeka).

*LAKE SHORE LIMITED, train 48, New York Jan 29: engine 491 (FL-9), power car 696; cars 1619, 2054, 2924 "Pacific Patrol", 4612, 4000, 4613, 3105, 8501, 21228, Conrail cars 2105, 2102, 2111 (CR-owned coaches were coming from Beech Grove, where Amtrak was rehabilitating them for CR.)

OLD MAP KIT

Consisting of Old State and Railroad maps 70-110 years old. All States. Some old County maps. Stamp for catalog.

The Northern Map Co.
Dept. RT Dunnellon, FL 32630.

RAIL FANTRIPS

Apr 3 & 4: Annual Spring Operational Meet at Texas State Railroad, Rusk TX. $10 reg. fee incl Sat. barbecue. Free train rides, four steam locos. Write: Texas State Railroad, Spring Train Meet, PO Box 39, Rusk TX 75785.

Apr 17-18: "Life of Riley". 20th C. RR Club recreates JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY behind HOOSIER STATE: NYC tavern-obs 48 & Heritage diner 7-course champagne dinner. SASE to: Richard Brooks, 8100 Rhodes, Chicago IL 60619. 783-8322.

Apr 24: "Port Jeffersonian" chartered train Jamaica NY-Port Jefferson RT. $25 coach, $30 parlor. Photo stops. Powered by Alco diesels. Send SASE to Railroad Enthusiasts-NY Division, PO Box A-1353, Grand Central, New York 10017

July 17 & 18: Denver, Colo. Mile High RAILFAIR, RR show featuring railroadiana, models, layouts, railroads, authors, artists, railroadiana dealers, movies, door prizes incl tickets for the RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR. Over 100 exhibits.

One Rail Fantrips listing is free. Send full info to:
RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, Fantrips Dept, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

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QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"Q. The company is receiving more and more requests to operate commute/passenger service over our lines. What effect would more passenger trains have on our freight business?

A. In general, they reduce freight capacity and interfere with service to shippers. Because of the railroads' fuel efficiency, the industry's real mission should be to move the nation's intercity freight. Passenger operations aren't cost effective. They disrupt service to shippers and undermine the railroad's ability to provide a good product. With the nation's energy situation the way it is, this is just not the right time to impose passenger service on rail lines."

--Interview with Southern Pacific VP-Operations Rob Krebs in Southern Pacific Bulletin, Jan.

(It wasn't the right time eleven years ago, either. When will it be?)

SLIP OF THE MONTH CLUB***

"Amtrak has been forced to restructure its rail service more than once since it was created by Congress and began operating in 1971. Five Midwestern states are providing assistance to the railroads beyond that provided by the federal government. They are Iowa, Minnesota, South Dakota, Michigan and Wisconsin."

--Edgar Poe in New Orleans Times-Picayune, Feb 7.

(South Dakota is not getting its money's worth, tho.)

GRAND EXCURSION

Nevada Northern Rwy

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EXPRESS ADS

DINING CAR CHINA, glasses, silver, cloth. Timetables, guides, stationery, rules, metal & Pullman items, annual reports. Many railroads. Long stamped envelope brings list. J. McClellan, 1752 S. Wichita, Wichita, KS 67213. Will buy items.

SCANNER ENTHUSIASTS.. Bearcat model 100 hand-held SYNTHESIZED scanner now ready. No crystals required to receive any RAIL-police-fire frequency. Low and highbank VHF, UHF. Complete with carry case, battery charger/AC adapter, earplug & antenna. $379.00 shipped UPS. Calif. residents add $22.74 sales tax. Ed Von Nordeck, P O Box 2768, Riverside CA 92516. 714-781-2930.

ANNOUNCING THE 1982 CITIZENS FOR RAIL CALIFORNIA ANNUAL CONFERENCE in Sacramento Feb. 26-28. Amtrak, Caltrans, discussion sessions on various rail passenger topics. Information from CRC, 2938 Loyola Dr, Davis CA 95616. Come learn about the California phenomenon: add service while the nation cuts back.

DELAWARE VALLEY RAILS, the complete railroad and rail transit guide to the Philadelphia region. $11.50 (Pennsylvanians, add 69¢ tax). $12.50 outside U.S. John R. Pawson, Box 411, Willow Grove, PA 19090.

AMTRAK Transcontinental Circle fares Jan 15 thru Apr 24. 14 or 30-day tickets offering circle fares in the West or combined with West and Eastern trains. Good in sleepers, stopovers may be made, Family Plan and senior discount apply. Ask us for details: LET'S TRAVEL TOURS, P O Box 2768, Riverside CA 92516. Phone 714-781-2930 or 787-8350. Rail travel experts since 1951.

RAILROAD CLOTH EMBLEMS. Over 400 different types. Send $1.00 for sample & list. Joseph Lajoie, P. O. Box 3, Methuen, Mass. 01844.

MAY 15: Coachella Valley Daylight; LA-Pomona-Yuma RT, lv 8:10am back 7:45pm. Superliners with P-30 locos. San Timeoteo Canyon, Salton Sea, etc. $75.00 chair car, parlor rooms available. Pacific Railroad Society, P O Box 2768, Riverside CA 92516-2768. (714) 684-7458 afternoons.

SEE OUR GREAT 3-table display, dining car china, glass, silver, cloth, • timetables, rules, other paper, etc. "CORNFIELD MEET" April 18th, Pasadena (Cal) HILTON 9am-4pm. Jim & Elaine McClellan of Wichita.

ONE SET ONLY. Entire first ten years of RTN except for two issues (Vol. 9, No. 13; Vol. 10, No. 10). Issues in excellent condition. The 21 Paul Rayton articles "Keeping Track"/"Rail Traveler's Diary" from Vols. 1 & 2, however, have been previously removed & are missing. Otherwise complete. $45 plus $6 postage. George A. Muench, 655-3 Ave. N.W., Calgary, Alberta T2N 0J2, Canada.

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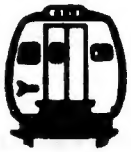

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Limited Editions - aluminum car kits for "Coast Daylight", "HO"
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Tomar passenger train tail signs (illuminated) "HO" & "O"
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